

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-3, 5, 9, 17, 18, 21 and 25-29 are pending.

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) Over Morimoto et al. (USP 6,544,725)**

Claims 1-3, 5, 9, 17, 18, 21 and 25-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Morimoto et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that Morimoto et al. (USP 6,544,725) is not prior art to the present invention. The present US application was filed February 8, 2001, and its priority date is February 23, 2000. By contrast, the earliest date that Morimoto et al. is available under 35 USC 102(e) is the US filing date of Morimoto et al. which is August 8, 2001.

Under these circumstances, Morimoto et al. is not prior art to the instant invention and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the above comments, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

**Conclusion**

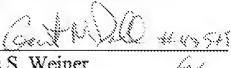
In view of the above remarks, it is believed that claims are allowable.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Garth M. Dahlen, Ph.D., Esq., Reg. No. 43,575 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By   
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